



December 28, 2009

Dear Governor and General Assembly:

The Urban Weatherization Initiative Act (30 ILCS 738/40-40) requires the Department to administer a grant program to expand employment opportunities and energy assistance for targeted populations in eligible grant areas in Illinois and report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the activities undertaken by the Department and its grantees.

SUMMARY

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's newly-created Office of Urban Assistance will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and management of the Urban Weatherization Initiative. The purpose of the Act is to: 1) create jobs and increase skills for the under/unemployed; 2) improve energy efficiency and reduce costs in disadvantaged communities; and 3) stimulate local economies.

The UWI provides for the disbursement of grants totaling no more than \$500,000 to public or private entities who partner with local community-based organizations to provide job training in the field of weatherization. The program will also provide weatherization benefits up to \$6,500 per unit for owner-occupied single and multi-family dwellings (of fewer than 6 units).

PROGRAM MODEL

The contemplated program model focuses on stimulating local economies by employing men and women from low-income communities to provide weatherization services within those communities. Eligible applicants include private, public and non-profit entities that can provide weatherization services and incorporate effective employment strategies in partnership with local community-based organizations. Grants will be awarded via a competitive request-for-proposal process and may not exceed \$500,000 per fiscal year.

The program will also stimulate local economies by utilizing local suppliers, distributors and/or manufacturers of equipment and supplies necessary for weatherization work. Targeted buildings are owner-occupied, single family homes and multifamily dwellings of 6 units or less in census tracts with high rates of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty. Weatherization activities include:

- Repair/replacement of inefficient heating or cooling units
- Addressing air infiltration issues (i.e.- weather stripping, caulking, window/door replacement)
- Repair/replacement of water heaters
- Pipe, duct insulation
- Training in weatherization skills
- Basic skills training (including workforce development)

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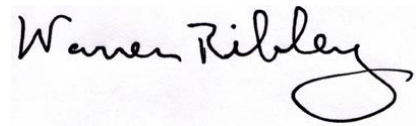
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The Office of Urban Assistance has begun making presentations to interested community groups to increase outreach before the program begins in the first quarter of 2010.

With your continued support and our commitment to the success of this innovative initiative, we seek to rejuvenate local economies, improve energy efficiency and decrease unemployment in targeted urban areas.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Warren Ribley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "R" at the end.

Warren Ribley
Director